The Department of Music

of

The University of Alberta

presents

GERHARD KRAPF, organist
(A Faculty Recital)

assisted by

Members of the University of Alberta Concert Choir

Friday, September 19, 1980 at 8:15 p.m.
Convocation Hall, Old Arts Building

Prelude and Fugue on a Theme of Vittoria. . . . . Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

Written in 1946 for St. Matthew's Church in Northampton, this is Britten's only work for organ solo. A six-note quotation of Vittoria (1548-1611) serves as mono-thematic nucleus, generating the terse Prelude's largamente pedal flourishes which are basted together by sustained manual chords. In the Fugue, two filigree-sections of "vocal" counterpoint envelop a climactic "instrumental" centerpiece.

Kyrie-Christe-Kyrie from Messe du deuziesme ton . . . . . André Raison (16..-1719)
(performed in alternatim style)

All 17th-century French organ music was liturgical, consisting largely of versets which were played in verse-by-verse alternation with chanted canticles, Gregorian hymns and ordinary portions of the Mass. Raison, organist of Sainte-Genevièvè, is a typical representative of the Parisian school, noted for its color-consciousness, gracefulness and avoidance of large forms. The bass line of the present Christe-verset forms the fugue subject and the first four measures of the eight-bar ostinato of Bach's Passacaglia, next on our program.

Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor (BMV 582). . . . . .Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Significantly, Mendelssohn programmed this work (along with the Fugue in E-flat Major, "Schmücke dich," Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, Pastorale, Toccata in F Major) for his celebrated all-Bach recital in Leipzig, August 6, 1840 (four years prior to Griepenkerl's edition of Bach's organ works), displaying the same instinct for greatness that had prompted his 1829 performance of the St. Matthew Passion. Bach, paying homage to Raison, expands that master's theme and miniature formal concept to truly imposing organistic proportions (20 variations, followed by a masterful fugue). Assignation to the pedal harpsichord (advanced by Forkel in his 1802 Bach biography, mentioned in Griepenkerl's Preface to Vol. I, and mistakenly interpreted "Cembalo ossia organo" in Rust's 1867 Bach Gesellschaft edition) appears in no extant manuscript: "It must seriously be doubted that the lost autograph [in the early nineteenth century; hence the impossibility of definitive dating] bore such a designation" (Lohmann).

INTERMISSION

Chorale Prelude and Fugue on "O Traurigkeit, o Herzeleid" . . . . . .Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

"O Sorrow Deep! Who Would Not Weep," notwithstanding its stringently contrapuntal fabric, is a lyrically reflective piece commemorating Christ's entombment. In the Prelude, the chorale tune appears in the soprano over gently rocking triplets. In the Fugue, it enters phrase by phrase in augmentation in the bass line between succinct fugal expositions. The fugue subject, appearing straight and inverted throughout, is derived from the chorale phrase "God, the Father's only Son." Brahms first published this work as supplement to the "Musikalisches Wochenblatt" in 1882.

Totentanz, Episodes and Fugue on a 17th-Century Folksong. . . . . .Gerhard Krapf
(b. 1924)

The late medieval preoccupation with death, reflected in often luridly graphic examples of a popular literary form, ars moriendi (the art of dying), may well have inspired the 16th-century Dance of Death paintings (e.g. Hans Holbein the Younger) calling man to his last dance. In 1606 Leonhard Lechner published his motets "Words on Life and Death" which inspired Distler's choral Totentanz. Liszt's work by the same name for piano and orchestra is a paraphrase of dies irae. The present piece, published in 1972, is based on a 17th-century folksong which alternately casts Death in such roles as courtly master of ceremonies and common bagpiper, beckoning royalty, gentry, burghers, vagrants, young and old. In the Episodes, the tune (a gallard) appears in various guises, all of which reappear as interludial material in the Fugue. The fugue subject, derived from the third phrase, "You all will have to join my dance," is identical with the Easter chorale "Christ, having lain in bonds of death, is risen." This chorale is introduced in the pedal, gradually gaining prominence and eventually dominating and shaping the final cadence.

Prelude and Fugue in C Minor (BWV 546). . . . . J. S. Bach

This is one of "Six Great Preludes and Fugues" (BWV 543-548) so grouped in a manuscript owned by Kirnberger. Although the authencity of this grouping (and the implied Leipzig provenance) is not documented, the compositional mastery points to Leipzig. Unfolding two thematic elements in alternating sections, the Prelude is a tour de force of formal symmetry. The Fugue treats a steely subject which is eventually joined by a secondary theme, in broadly arching phrases of perfect formal proportions.